WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A response apparatus comprising:

status acquisition means for acquiring a status;

response content determination means for determining a response content in accordance with said acquired status;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with said determined response content; and

response information output means for outputting said prepared response information.

2. A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said response information preparation means prepares said response information in a form corresponding to a medium at a response addressee.

3. A response apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising: definition information storage means for storing definition information that defines a response content for a status, wherein said response content determination means determines a response content by referring to said definition information storage means.

4. A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said status acquired by said status acquisition means indicates there are a plurality of statuses that

occur at the same time.

5. A response apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein said response content preparation means
includes response content information preparation data
storage means for storing fixed information for each
portion of a content that is prepared, and employs said
fixed information to prepare a response content.

6. A response apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein said response content preparation means
includes response content preparation rule storage
means for storing a response content preparation rule,
and employs said response content preparation rule to
prepare a response content.

7. A response apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein said response information preparation means
includes:
     text preparation means for preparing text of said
response information; and
     additional sentence preparation means for
preparing an opening sentence or a closing sentence.

8. A response apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein said response information output means
transmits said response information using electronic
mail.

9. A response apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said response information output means includes addition means for adding an electronic mail header or an electronic mail footer to response information

5 prepared by said response information preparation means.

10. A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said response information output means outputs

10 response information to a telephone.

11. A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said telephone is a portable telephone.

15 12. A response apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said response information output means transmits response information to a management system.

13. A response apparatus according to claim 12,

20 wherein said management system is a database management system.

14. A response apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said management system is a file management

25 system.

15. A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said response information output means

transmits response information using a home page.

16.   A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said response information output means outputs response information using sound.

17.   A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said response information output means outputs response information to a pocket bell.

18.   A response apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said response information output means outputs response information to a facsimile machine.

19.   A response apparatus comprising:
status acquisition means for acquiring a status;
response procedure determination means for determining response procedures in accordance with said acquired status;
response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with said determined response procedures; and
response information output means for outputting said prepared response information in accordance with said determined response procedures.

20.   A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means

selects a response procedure from a plurality of
available response procedures.

21. A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure determination means
determines a response procedure in consonance with the
degree of importance of said status.

22. A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure determination means
determines whether or not a response is to be
transmitted.

23. A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure determination means
determines a response content.

24. A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure determination means
designates a response medium.

25. A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure determination means
designates a response addressee.

26. A response apparatus according to claim 19,
wherein said response procedure determination means
designates a response timing.

27. A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means designates a language type.

28. A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines the degree of detail in an explanation.

29. A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a condition for transmission of a response.

30. A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a re-response procedure.

31. A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines the number of re-responses.

32. A response apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising: definition information storage means for storing definition information that defines a response procedure for a status, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response procedure by referring to said definition information storage means.

33. A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information indicate a single status.

5   34. A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information also include a combination composed of a plurality of statuses.

10   35. A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information also include a status that changes as time elapses.

36. A response apparatus according to claim 32, 15   wherein statuses in said definition information also include a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

37. A response apparatus according to claim 19, 20   further comprising response procedure designation means for designating a response procedure for each status, wherein, in consonance with said acquired status, said response procedure selection means selects a response procedure designated by said response procedure 25   designation means.

38. A response apparatus comprising: response procedure determination means for

determining response procedures in accordance with said acquired status;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with said determined response procedures;

response information output means for outputting said prepared response information in accordance with said determined response procedures;

response result determination means for determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting said response information; and

re-response control means for, when said response result determination means ascertains that said response has failed, permitting said response procedure determination means to determine re-response procedures, for permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with said re-response procedures, and for permitting said response information output means to output said re-response information.

39. A response apparatus according to claim 38, further comprising status acquisition means for acquiring a status, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response procedure in consonance with said status that is acquired.

40. A response apparatus according to claim 38,

wherein said response procedure determination means selects a response procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

41. A response apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said response result determination means employs a status after said response information has been output to determine whether or not a response has failed.

42. A response apparatus according to claim 41, wherein said status after said response information has been output is a status obtained when a predetermined time has elapsed following output of said response information.

43. A response apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said response procedure determination means determines as said re-response procedure a response procedure other than said response procedure that has failed.

44. A response apparatus comprising:

response content determination means for determining a response content in accordance with said acquired status;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with said

determined response content;

response information output means for outputting said prepared response information;

response addressee status acquisition means for acquiring a status for a response addressee;

determination means for employing said status at said response addressee that is acquired by said response addressee status acquisition means to determine whether or not a person at said response addressee is prepared to handle said response; and

re-response control means for, when said determination means determines that said person is not prepared to handle said response, permitting said response procedure determination means to determine re-response procedures, for permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with said re-response procedures, and for permitting said response information output means to output said re-response information.

45. A response apparatus according to claim 44, further comprising status acquisition means for acquiring a status, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response procedure in consonance with said status that is acquired.

46. A response apparatus according to claim 44,

wherein said response procedure determination means
selects a response procedure from a plurality of
available response procedures.

5   47. A response apparatus according to claim 44,
wherein, after said response information has been
output, said determination means employs a reply from
said response addressee to determine whether or not
said response addressee is capable of handling a
10   response.

        48. A response apparatus according to claim 47,
wherein, in consonance with whether said reply is
transmitted within a predetermined period of time after
15   said response information has been output, said
determination means determines whether or not said
response addressee is capable of handling a response.

        49. A response apparatus according to claim 47,
20   wherein, in consonance with whether or not the effect
ability to cope with a response is described in said
reply, said determination means determines whether or
not said response addressee is capable of handling a
response.

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        50. A response apparatus according to claim 44,
wherein said response procedure determination means
determines as said re-response procedure a response

procedure other than said response procedure that has failed.

51. A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein said determination means performs a determination before transmission of a response to a response addressee that is an object for said determination.
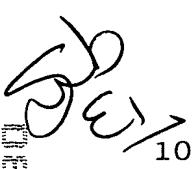
52. A response method comprising the steps of:

acquiring a status;

determining a response content in accordance with said acquired status;

preparing response information in accordance with said determined response content; and

outputting said prepared response information.

53. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information preparation step said response information is prepared in a form corresponding to a medium at a response addressee.

54. A response method according to claim 52, further comprising the step of storing definition information that defines a response content for a status, wherein at said response content determination step a response content is determined by referring to said definition information.

55. A response method according to claim 52, wherein said status acquired at said status acquisition step indicates there are a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

56. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at response content preparation step, response content information preparation data storage means is referred to in which is stored fixed information for each portion of a content that is prepared, and said fixed information is employed to prepare a response content.

57. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response content preparation step, response content preparation rule storage means is referred to in which is stored a response content preparation rule, and said response content preparation rule is employed to prepare a response content.

58. A response method according to claim 52, wherein said response information preparation step includes:

a text preparation step of preparing text of said response information; and

an additional sentence preparation step of preparing an opening sentence or a closing sentence.

59. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step said response information is transmitted using electronic mail.

60. A response method according to claim 59, wherein said response information output step includes an addition step of adding an electronic mail header or an electronic mail footer to response information prepared at said response information preparation step.

61. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step response information is output to a telephone.

62. A response method according to claim 61, wherein said telephone is a portable telephone.

63. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step response information is transmitted to a management system.

64. A response method according to claim 63, wherein said management system is a database management system.

65. A response method according to claim 63,

wherein said management system is a file management system.

66. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step response information is transmitted using a home page.

67. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step response information is output using sound.

68. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step response information is output to a pocket bell.

69. A response method according to claim 52, wherein at said response information output step response information is output to a facsimile machine.

70. A response method comprising the steps of:
acquiring a status;
determining response procedures in accordance with said acquired status;
preparing response information in accordance with said determined response procedures; and
outputting said prepared response information in accordance with said determined response procedures.

71. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response procedure is selected from a plurality of available response procedures.

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72. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response procedure is determined in consonance with the degree of importance of said status.

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73. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step whether or not a response is to be transmitted is determined.

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74. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response content is designated.

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75. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response medium is designated.

76. A response method according to claim 70,

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wherein at said response procedure determination step a response addressee is designated.

77. A response method according to claim 70,

wherein at said response procedure determination step a response timing is designated.

78. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a language type is designated.

79. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step the degree of detail in an explanation is determined.

80. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a condition for transmission of a response is determined.

81. A response method according to claim 70, wherein at said response procedure determination step a re-response procedure is determined.

82. A response method according to claim 81, wherein at said response procedure determination step the number of re-responses is determined.

83. A response method according to claim 70, further comprising: a definition information storage step of storing definition information that defines a response procedure for a status, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response

procedure is determined by referring to said definition information storage step.

84.   A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in said definition information indicate a single status.

85.   A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in said definition information also include a combination composed of a plurality of statuses.

86.   A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in said definition information also include a status that changes as time elapses.

87.   A response method according to claim 83, wherein statuses in said definition information also include a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

88.   A response method according to claim 70, further comprising a response procedure designation step of designating a response procedure for each status, wherein, in consonance with said acquired status, at said response procedure selection step a response procedure is selected that has been designated at said response procedure designation step.

89. A response method comprising the steps of:

determining response procedures in accordance with said acquired status;

preparing response information in accordance with

5   said determined response procedures;

outputting said prepared response information in accordance with said determined response procedures;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting said response information;

10 and

determining, when it is ascertained at said response result determination step that said response has failed, re-response procedures at response procedure determination means, preparing re-response

15 information at said response information preparation step in accordance with said re-response procedures, and outputting said re-response information at said response information output step.

20   90. A response method according to claim 89, further comprising a status acquisition step of acquiring a status, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response procedure is determined in consonance with said status that is acquired.

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91. A response method according to claim 89, wherein at said response procedure determination step a response procedure is selected from a plurality of

available response procedures.

92. A response method according to claim 89,
wherein at said response result determination step a
status after said response information has been output
is employed to determine whether or not a response has
failed.

93. A response method according to claim 92,
wherein said status after said response information has
been output is a status obtained when a predetermined
time has elapsed following output of said response
information.

94. A response method according to claim 89,
wherein at said response procedure determination step a
response procedure other than said response procedure
that has failed is determined as said re-response
procedure.

95. A response method comprising the steps of:
determining a response content in accordance with
said acquired status;
preparing response information in accordance with
said determined response content;
outputting said prepared response information;
acquiring a status at a response addressee;
employing said status at said response addressee

that is acquired at said response addressee status

acquisition step to determine whether or not a person

at said response addressee is prepared to handle said

response; and

5   determining, when it is ascertained at said

determination step that said person is not prepared to

handle said response, re-response procedures at said

response procedure determination step, preparing re-

response information at said response information

10 preparation step in accordance with said re-response

procedures, and outputting said re-response information

at said response information output step.

96.   A response method according to claim 95,

15 further comprising a status acquisition step of

acquiring a status, wherein at said response procedure

determination step a response procedure is determined

in consonance with said status that is acquired.

20   97.   A response method according to claim 95,

wherein at said response procedure determination step a

response procedure is selected from a plurality of

available response procedures.

25   98.   A response method according to claim 95,

wherein, at said determination step, after said

response information has been output, a reply from said

response addressee is employed to determine whether or

not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

99. A response method according to claim 98, wherein, at said determination step, whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response is determined in consonance with whether said reply is transmitted within a predetermined period of time after said response information has been output.

100. A response method according to claim 98, wherein, at said determination step, whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response is determined in consonance with whether or not the effect ability to cope with a response is described in said reply.

101. A response method according to claim 95, wherein, at said response procedure determination step, a response procedure other than said response procedure that has failed is determined as said re-response procedure.

102. A response method according to claim 95, wherein said determination is performed before transmission of a response to a response addressee that is an object for said determination.

103. A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

5   acquiring a status;

determining a response content in accordance with said acquired status;

preparing response information in accordance with said determined response content; and

10   outputting said prepared response information.

104. A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes

15   for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

acquiring a status;

determining response procedures in accordance with said acquired status;

preparing response information in accordance with

20   said determined response procedures; and

outputting said prepared response information in accordance with said determined response procedures.

105. A computer-readable storage medium in which

25   is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

determining response procedures in accordance with

said acquired status;

preparing response information in accordance with said determined response procedures;

outputting said prepared response information in

5   accordance with said determined response procedures;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting said response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained at said

10   response result determination step that said response has failed, re-response procedures at response procedure determination means, preparing re-response information at said response information preparation step in accordance with said re-response procedures,

15   and outputting said re-response information at said response information output step.

106. A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer

20   to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

determining a response content in accordance with said acquired status;

preparing response information in accordance with

25   said determined response content;

outputting said prepared response information;

acquiring a status at a response addressee;

employing said status at said response addressee

that is acquired at said response addressee status
acquisition step to determine whether or not a person
at said response addressee is prepared to handle said
response; and

5   determining, when it is ascertained at said
determination step that said person is not prepared to
handle said response, re-response procedures at said
response procedure determination step, preparing re-
response information at said response information
10 preparation step in accordance with said re-response
procedures, and outputting said re-response information
at said response information output step.